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LEET LIVVY



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LEET LIVVY

BY

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London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.
3 Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.2. 1919

First issued (privately) in 1915

New Edition 1919

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LEET LIVVY

DEEÄD, dosta saäy?—owd Mattha?—owd
Mattha o' Marlby Moor?

Dee'd while agaäte of his braikfast?—why
didn't they tell ma afoor?

I been up at t' chu'ch all t' mornin', an' I
could ha' pulled for him then,

An' now here's mi dinner on t' täble; tha mun
wait till I've noytered misen.

Soä he's deeäd, is Mattha, is a?—went off of
a suddin, like?

Summat es leeäves falls off an' harstles awaäy
i' th' dyke.

Nowt ta foretell 'at they're gooin'; it's offens
th' saäme wi' us;

Weel, Mattha 'ud hev no objections; he wor
nivver t' man for a fuss.

Dee'd sittin' up i' his chair, agaäte of his braik-
fast, ya saäy ?

Aye, some on 'em goäs saäme as that, an' some
on 'em halts bi t' waäy.

But they all hev to goä, mi lad, they all hev ta
goä, chewse how !

I owt ta knaw bi this time ; I ha' pulled for a
many bi now.

Three for a bairn, an' six for a woman, an' nine
for a man !

That's what mi feyäther larn'd ma to pull when
I fo'st began ;

Wi' a extry stroäke for eaäch year as ivver
they'd been alive.

I shall hev a stiff pull ta-daäy : owd Mattha
wor seventy-five.

Cowd, dosta saäy, comin' here ta Marlby fra
ovver yon hill ?

Hev a sup o' aäle ta warm thi—theer's t' pot
—tha can tak' thi fill ;

Theer's plenty more wheer that cam' fro' ;
tha needn't ta hev noä fear :

I suddn't be what I am, lad, if it worrn't for
beef an' beer,

Seventy-five wor Mattha, but I'm gooin' i'
seventy-three.

Tha's nooän been sa long wi' Mattha—thi faäce
is straänge ta me.

Come t' last Martlemas, did ta? An' how
hesta liked thi plaäce?

Sourish o' temper, wor Mattha; he'd nivver a
smile ta his faäce?

Why, Mattha he hed his reäsons; theer's some
as is soured when young,

An' Mattha hed plenty o' reäsons for keepin' a
sharp-set tongue;

He'd been bitten i' love as a young 'un, and
t' bite wor foul an' deep,

An' he nivver forgat it, did Mattha, onless he
wor drunk or asleep.

Started i' life reight weel, at yon farm upo'
Marlby Moor;

Heeäd screwed tight on his showthers, th' saäme
as his feyäther afore;

Knew a taäte fro' a tonnup, an' wrastled while
other fowk slep',

An' he scratted for brass all his daäys, an' all
'at he scratted he kep'.

Cut up varry weel, will Mattha ; thee wait till
I've ligged him cloäse !
Nivver wor married, tha knaws, but theer's
nevvies ta get their doäse.
I'll lay 'at they're noän on 'em sorry ta hear
'at he's browt ta t' graäve,
Aye, cut up a good 'un, he will—he nivver did
nowt but saäve.

For tha sees, when Mattha wor bitten, it tonn'd
him back on hisself ;
Thowt nivver noä more o' wimmen, nor o' nowt
but getherin' pelf ;
An' he's gethered, I say, to some purpose—but
once, tha mun understand,
He'd ha' given all t' gowd i' t' warld for t'
touch of a lass's hand.

He wor summat o' thy aäge at that time—
what ar'ta ?—twenty-three ?
Limmer and leet on his toäs, wi' a roäguish
glint i' his e'e.
Allus a faäv'rite wi' t' lasses ; he'd nobbut ta
chewse an' pick ;
An' he maäde his choice, did Mattha, an' he
chewsed a crooked stick.

Not but what t' lass wor weel-faäavour'd ; she
wor reight enough i' her looks ;
Bit of a beauty shoo wor, like them as ya reäd
on i' t' books ;
But vaäne, mi lad, varry vaäne, an' flighty,
an' soft efter men ;
Laädy's maäd at th' Hall shoo wor—an' t' Hall
wor a bad plaäce then.

For t' Squire wor raäkish and raffish, an' his
wife wor inclined ta be gaäy,
An' they tonn'd ivvry daäy inta neet, an'
ivvry neet inta daäy,
An' t' lass tewk efter her missis, an' allus wor
makkin' e'es,
An' shoo maäde 'em, tha knaws, at Mattha, an'
Mattha grew wake i' t' knees.

He wor sattled for ivver, wor Mattha ; hev her
he must an' would !
For he cam' of a maisterful raäce, an' wor hot
wi' maisterful blood,
An' he gat round t' Squire' missis, an' t' missis
shoo talked to t' lass ;
An' t' text o' ivvery sarmon shoo preeäched
wor Mattha' brass.

Sich a chance ! the chance of a lifetime ! sich
a steady an' fine young chap !
One as could gown her i' silk, an' chuck a fat
purse i' her lap,
A chance i' a thousand !—nivver wor lass soä
lucky afoor.
But t' lass wor fond o' life, an' it's dowly o'
Marlby Moor.

An' shoo tonn'd up her noäse, did Livvy ; shoo
wodn't be buried alive,
An' shoo wodn't saäy nowt to Mattha, how-
ivver t' missis might strive,
But Mattha he'd maäde up his mind, an' he
nivver wo'd let her alooän,
An' they said 'at the waäy 'at he pled wo'd ha'
melted a heart o' stooän.

An' him an' t' missis gat round her wi' talk o'
what he wo'd do ;
Live like a laädy shoo should, an' nivver need
mucky a shoe ;
An' he'd furnish i' t' latest style, an' keep her
an extra lass ;
An' i' t' end shoo gev in, an' shoo promised to
wed him at Martlemas.

Proud as a peacock wor Mattha, an' wared
his brass like a king ;
Set up new chairs and taables, and bowt her a
di'mond ring.
It wor June when shoo gev him her word, an'
t' rooäses wor red i' th' laäne :—
But Mattha he nivver could bide th' seet of a
rooäse agaäne.

For t' Squire wor allus fillin' his house wi' a
raäkish crowd ;
Come'd and goä'd as they pleeäsed, wi' ivvery
license allowed ;
Gam'led an' supped like Owd Harry—it wor
t' feshion for t' quality then,
An' one on 'em gat round Livvy, an' Livvy
wor wake wi' men.

One on 'em gat round Livvy, an' Livvy, tha
sees, wor wake ;
It wor Mattha' brass 'at shoo cared for, an'
little for Mattha' sake ;
An' shoo tewk her pleasure wi' t' feller, an' t'
feller he went awaäy,
An' he thowt noä more o' Livvy, an' Livvy
wor left ta paäy.

An' at t' last it all cam' out, for Livvy shoo
hed ta tell ;
An' t' missis, shoo tell'd it ta Mattha, an'
Mattha went down ta Hell.
An' he bided i' flaämes and torments, an' they
bonn'd him fierce an' strong,
Till they'd bonn'd awaäy his marcy, an' he
thowt o' nowt but his wrong.

An' he wodn't hear o' forgiveness, howivver
they begged an' straäve ;
Forgive her ? Aye, he'd forgive her when one
on 'em cam' to t' graäve !
For tha sees, he wor proud, wor Mattha, an'
his pride hed been cut to t' quick,
An' it maddled him waur nor madness 'at he'd
chozzen a crooked stick.

An' Livvy shoo cam' to her trouble wi' noaän
to stan' her by ;
For t' missis hed fish of her awn, of another
soaärt, to fry ;
An' t' Squire he laughed when they tell'd him,
an' t' sarvents they lewked aside,
An' Livvy shoo wedded wi' shaäme, isteeäd o'
bein' Mattha' bride.

An' somewheer shoo went, tha knows, ta hide
her shaäme an' disgraäce,
An' Mattha he stalked about t' land wi' a black
an' a scowlin' faäce,
An' he tewk to t' drink for a piece, an' went
efter wimmen an' all,
But he nivver could mak' hissen drunk, an'
t'wimmen began to stall.

Soä he sooin wor tired o' wimmen, an' he
tonn'd off t' sarvent lass ;
Wodn't hev a woman i' t' house, an' tewk ta
scrattin' for brass ;
Did his awn housekeepin', too, an' started ta
fend for hissen,
An' he nivver hed nowt to saäy when he met
wi' other men.

An' he drave hard barg'ins at t' markit, an'
treeäted poor fowk hard,
An' t' Parson, he hed ta warn him about his
etarnal reward,
But he damned at t' Parson, did Mattha, an'
he sweered 'at theer warn't noä God :
An' he passed t' Parson' missis i' t' rooäd, an'
nivver gev her a nod,

An' soä it cam', dosta see, 'at Mattha wor left
alooän,
For he hedn't noä bowels o' marcy, an' his
heart wor tonn'd to stooän;
An' he sate by hissen i' t' house, an' wodn't hev
noä one theer,
An' he nivver rade through t' village but t'
bairns shrenk off i' fear.

But Livvy shoo drifted awaäy, an' shoo went
to London town,
An' shoo traäded her body for brass, an' her
soul for a fine new gown,
An' I knew o' them as see'd her, an' they said
as shoo tewk her stand,
An' offered what sich-like offers, i' a plaäce 'at
they call the Strand.

But Livvy wor nivver a fooil; shoo knew what
wor what, did that!
Sharp as Mattha, shoo wor, where'er theer
wor brass to be gat.
An' shoo sell'd her wares to 'vantage, an' nivver
cheeäpened hersel',
An' shoo sammed up gowd an' silver down
theer on th' floors o' Hell.

I nivver see'd her i' London—I nivver set foot
i' t' plaäce !
But 't wor said 'at shoo lewked like a laädy,
an' wor dallackt i' silk an' laäce,
An' a chap 'at wor noän partik'lar he tewk
her to t' chu'ch one daäy,
An' maäde her a honest woman, an' Livvy
threw t' past awaäy.

Kep' a public, somewheer i' London, this feller
'at Livvy wed,
See'd her i' t' bar one day, a chap fro' Marlby
hed ;
Pleaäsed ta see him shoo wor, an' axed him
about owd times,
An' interduced him to t' husband, an' wor
merry as May-Day chimes.

An' t' feller cam' hooäm an' tell'd as how Leet
Livvy wor wed,
An' ware a ring on her finger, an' ligged i' a
honest bed ;
An' t' news on it ran through Marlby, an'
Mattha he come ta hear,
An' he laughed for t'onny time i' summat like
fifty year.

An' a chap 'at he met at t' markit, as hed
drucken below his peg,
He cracked a jooäke about Livvy, an' thowt
ta pull Mattha' leg.
But Mattha he tuk him bi t' throoät, an'
nivver a wo'd he said,
An' he flang him haäfe way across t' street,
an' they picked t' chap up for dead.

An' it gat about 'at Mattha worn't saäfe, an'
they let him alooän,
For his faäce wor like yon image 'at's carved
on t' tower i' stooän,
An' what few wo'ds he spake wor bitter an'
sharp as gall:—
An' all of a sudden Leet Livvy cam' back to
Marlby Hall.

For a deeäl o' things hed happened up theer
at t' Hall o' laäte;
For t' Squire he brok' his neck, lowpin' ovver
a five-barred gaäte,
An' t' missis shoo wanted owd faäces, an'
tonn'd her French maid awaäy,
Shoo mun hev Livvy back, shoo mun—an'
shoo sent for Livvy to staäy.

An' Livvy wor widdered an' all, for t' chap at
shoo'd hooked wor deeäd,
Tummed down t' cellar steps, an' leeted on t'
crown o' his heeäd;
An' Livvy cam' in for his brass—houses, an'
stocks, an' shares;
Soä Livvy wor quite th' laädy, an' gev hersen
laädy's airs.

An' shoo peäcocked ta t' chu'ch o' Sunda',
for all shoo wor gowned i' black,
An' shoo sate i' a pew bi hersen, an' fowk
tittered behind her back;
An' they gethered i' t' pooärch efter t' sarvice,
an' stared as shoo passed 'em by,
But Livvy shoo carried a Prayer-Book, an' her
thowts wor fixed on high.

A reight fine woman, shoo wor, mind!—Mrs.
Primmer her naäme wor, then;
Sooärt o' woman, tha knaws, 'at's allus run
efter bi' t' men;
'Caäsioned a deeäl o' gossip, an' Mattha he
heeärd fówk talk,
An' they said 'at he started ta dither, an'
tonn'd as white as a mawk.

Kep' ta hissen did Mattha—ne'er cam' off o'
Marlby Moor,
An' saäve when he went on t' land ne'er showed
his nooäse out o' t' door ;
Hooäped, dosta see, 'at Livvy 'ud traipse off
to London agaäne,
But Livvy shoo laäd her plans, an' shoo met
him i' Marlby Laäne.

An' noäbody nivver knawed what passed
atween 'em that daäy,
But Mattha gat seet o' me nex' time I wor
goin' that waäy,
An' he fotched ma into t' house, an' filled ma
a jug o' aäle,
An' afoor I knew what he wor efter, he'd
started to tell his taäle.

“ Th'art t' saxton an' t' clerk,” he says, “ an'
thi traäde's to crooäk *Aw-men* !
But when t' prayin' an' t' preeächin's done wi',
th'art nowt but a man, thisen ;
An' tha knows what man is maäde on, an' I'll
tell thi, plaän an' free,
For I willn't talk ta t' Parson, but I dooänt
mind talkin' ta thee.

“ An’ I want ta ax tha a question, an’ I want
tha ta tell ma sträight,
As if tha wor stannin’ thi trial up theer at th’
narra gaäte,
For I’ve allus held tha a wise ’un, I knaw ’at
tha’s plenty o’ gawm :—
Dosta think ’at ivver t’ Devil goäs about i’
human form ?

“ Tak’ thi time—doänt speyk i’ a hurry—
hear all ’at I’ve gotten to saäy.
I met—but tha knaws who I meeän—i’ t’
laäne theer, t’other daäy.
An’ I nivver held wi’ witches, an’ I nivver
believed i’ a spell,
But I tell tha I’m plaägued wi’ torments as if
I wor deep i’ Hell !

“ For I haäte her, waur nor ivver, but shoo
pulls, shoo pulls, all t’ saäme ;
An’ haäfe o’ ma’s cowl as snaw, an’ t’other
haäfe’s hot wi’ flaäme ;
An’ theer’s times I could rive her to regs, an’
stamp ’em under mi heel !
But theer’s summat shoo’s tee’d around ma
’at’s tougher nor onny steel,

“Th’art acquainted wi’ t’ Bible, saxton, an’
tha knaws how things began.
T’ sarpent, he tempted t’ woman, an’ t’ woman
shoo tempted t’ man.
But doesn’t it meeän at t’ Devil he’d entered
i’ woman then,
An’ ’at wimmen is maäde as they are for t’
purpose o’ ’ticin’ men?

“Hows’ivver, thee answer my question.” But
theer I shewk mi heeäd.
“I’d rayther ye’d goä to t’ Parson, an’ tak’
his counsel isteeäd;
Nay, goä to t’ Parson, maister!” I says, an’
I says it agääne.
But Mattha he damned at t’ Parson, an’ he
went that neet ta t’ laäne.

Soä t’ yeär o’ mournin’ wor done, an’ Livvy
shoo flang off her black,
An’ shoo saäled up t’ aisle t’ next Sunda’ wi’
breet blue silk on her back,
An’ t’ men stared oppen-mouthed, but t’
wimmen grew red wi’ shaäme,
An’ Livvy shoo stuck to t’ Prayer-Book, an’
went as bold as shoo caäme,

Theer worrn't noä shaämin' Livvy; shoo'd
brass of her awn, ya see,
As weel as t' brass 'at Primmer hed maäde or
he cam' to dee,
An' shoo reckoned hersen weel whiteweshed,
whativver shoo'd been afoor,
An' shoo meant to be Mistress Martin, up theer
upo' Marlby Moor.

Hesta ivver stood o' yon hill, when a hawk
wor hengin' i' t' sky,
Lewkin' down on a bo'd beneäth wi' a sharp
an' a wetchin' eye?
It wor soä 'at Livvy wetched Mattha, an'
Mattha grew moythered, like,
An' Livvy shoo waäted an' hovvered till t'
moäment wor come to strike.

An' fowk see'd what wor goin' on, an' they
started to talk an' sneer,
For they knawed th' sooärt o' life 'at shoo'd
lived up i' London theer,
An' owd Mestur Pratt o' Pigsby, he wor
shaämed at th' comin' disgraäce,
An' he rade ovver t' hill ta Mattha, an' he
telled him t' truth to his faäce.

“ I knawed thi feyäther afoor tha ; th’art
come of a good owd stock.
Nivver wor knawn a Martin ’at worrn’t as firm
as a rock
For stannin’ by all ’at’s reight, an’ they ’arned
a deeäl o’ respect.
But tha’s brekkin’ t’ rule, mi lad, an’ I hoäpe
’at tha’ll staäy ta reflect.

“ Arta that wake ’at tha can’t leeäve goä o’
yon woman’ skirt ?
Skirt ’at’s fahled an’ filthied wi’ t’ dreggin’s o’
London dirt !
Wilta tak’ up straänge men’s leeävins, not left
i’ a honest waäy ?
Thi feyäther ’ud lowp i’ his graäve if he nobbut
could see this daäy !

“ Could ta ho’d up thi heeäd at markit if tha
wedded wi’ sich as yon,
As can nivver wipe out t’ reflections on all ’at’s
past an’ gone ?
Owered an’ done wi’, happen, but thou wod’st
nivver forget,
An’ theer ne’er wor a brokken pot remaäde to
a sound ’un yet !

“ T’ cracks an’ t’ seeäms’ll be theer, howivver
ya fare wi’ t’ mend !

Tak’ tent o’ thi doin’s, mi lad—I could like to
stan’ thi friend.

Put her cleeän out o’ thi mind, an’ be thi awn
man agaäne ! ”

But Mattha, he nivver said nowt, an’ he met
her that neet i’ t’ laäne.

An’ Sunda’ cam’ round, an’ spurrin’s time, an’
t’ Parson oppened his book :

“ I publish the banns of marriage,” he says,
an’ his owd voice shook,

An’ t’ fowk pricked up their eärs, an’ what
wor expected caäme,

An’ ya could ha’ heerd a pin drop, till som’dy
shahted “ Shaäme ! ”

An’ Livvy wor theer, an’ shoo hed no shaäme,
an’ shoo nivver tonn’d a hair ;

Maäde as if nowt hed happened, an’ gev back
stare for stare ;

An’ t’ Parson cut t’ sarmon short, for t’ fowk
’ud listen noä more,

An’ Poll Smith beeäled out “ Trollop ! ” when
Livvy marched off fro’ t’ door.

Baddish time it wor then ! for all t' village wor
set bi t' ears,
An' t' better sooärt wor afräid, an' t' Parson,
he hed his fears.
An' he went ta Mattha on t' quiet, an' begged
him to wed elsewheer ;
But Mattha' pride wor up, an' he sware 'at he'd
wed her theer.

Wed her i' t' chu'ch, he wo'd, an' he'd walk
her through Marlby street ;
Do it i' dayleet he wo'd, aboveboard, i' all men's
seet ;
Noä hoäles-an'-corners for him, an' he darr'd
'em ta saäy him naäy !
—An' t' Parson went on wi' t' spurrin's, an'
it cam' ta t' weddin' daäy.

An' early that daäy two straängers draäve
quietly up ta t' Hall ;
Come i' a clooäsed-in carriage, like quality
payin' a call ;
An' t' carriage draäve back i' a while, an'
Livvy wor saäfe inside,
An' shoo spent that neet i' jail, isteeäd o' bein
Mattha' bride.

An' t' taäle come out t' next daäy, an' a niceish
taäle it were ;
Nivver wor nowt i' Marlby afoor 'at hed
maäde sich a stir !
For Livvy hed browt forth a bairn or ivver
shoo'd been a wife,
An' her an' another woman hed maäde awaäy
wi' it' life.

Telled it, hed t'other woman ; could keep it
back noä moäre ;
Mun tell it or ivver shoo dee'd, an shoo proved
it behind an' befoäre ;
An' shoo threäped 'at Livvy hed been as bad
an' warse nor hersen.
Soä Livvy wor left to t' Law, an' t' Law wor a
hard 'un then.

Hedn't noä marcy at t' 'Sizes ; they harstled
'em inta t' dock,
An' harstled 'em off ta t' gallows, as sooin as
t' Judge hed spok' ;
They henged 'em for steeälin' a sheep, an'
they henged 'em i' public, an' all ;
An' they henged Livvy Primmer one mornin'
i' front o' Granchester Wall.

An' Mattha he went ta t' 'Sizes, an' he set
whol they tried th' caäse.
An' his e'es they wor fixed like gimlets on
Livvy Primmer's faäce ;
An' i' t' end shoo maäde for to speyk, but t'
wo'ds they stuck i' her throat,
An' shoo lifted her faäce to Mattha, an' Mattha
he nivver said nowt.

Cam' hooäm like a man i' a dreeäm, an' walked
as if he wor blind,
An' t' talk it ran round Marlby 'at Mattha'd
goän out of his mind ;
An' t' day o' t' hengin' caäme, an' Mattha gat
up wi' t' sun,
An' he raäde ta Granchester Wall, to wetch
till t' job wor done.

An' t' rooäds 'at Mattha raäde by they wor
busy an' black wi' men,
For ivverybody mun goä—I wor young, an' I
went misen—
But Mattha seed nowt an' noä one, an' he
tewk his stand bi me,
An' he didn't know who I wor, an' I darren't
meet his e'e.

An' t' sun rooäse heigh ovver t' town, an' it
flaämed on t' Minster spire,
Till t' cross 'at's set aboon all shone out like a
maäze o' fire,
An' t' fowk they gabbed an' they chattered till
t' Minster clock struck eight,
An' t' sheriff an' t' hengman an' Livvy caäme
out o' t' Castle Gaäte.

An' t' gabbin' an' t' chatterin' wor done, an'
t' fowk grew still as mice,
An' Mattha tewk grip o' my arm, an' his hand
wor waur nor a vice.
An' theer wor me as hed allus been sort o' hand
i' hand wi' Death
An' couldn't lewk noä more!—an' Mattha he
held his breath.

An' he drawed his breath, an' I knew it wor
done, an' theer worn't noä more to see;
An' Mattha he bent his heeäd, an' he maäde
awaäy fro' me;
An' t' fowk they seeämed ta wonder whativver
hed drawn 'em theer.
But Mattha he begged for t' body, an' he browt
an' buried it here,

Wi' ta hev some moär aäle? Tha weern't?
Then we'll off, an' we'll pull yon bell.
Tha can gi' ma a hand wi' t' pullin'; th'art
noän as owd as misel';
An' I'll larn tha ta pull as mi feyäther larnt
ma when fost I began.
Three for a bairn, an' six for a woman, an' nine
for a man.

Theer's t' plaäce 'at I meeän for Mattha, an'
yon's wheer Livvy laäys;
Noän sa far off of eäch other, tha sees, at t'
end o' their daäys.
But wheerivver their souls maäy be!—naäy,
that ye mun tak' on trust.
I ha' nowt to do wi' their souls—my traäde
is wi' deeäd men's dust.

THE END

GLOSSARY

PAGE

5.	Agaäte of .	. occupied with.
5.	Noytered .	. nurtured.
5.	Harstles .	. hurries.
10.	Dowly .	. lonely.
14.	Sammed .	. gathered.
15.	Dallackt .	. bedizened.
17.	Dither .	. tremble.
17.	Mawk .	. maggot.
19.	Gawm .	. common sense.
21.	Moythered .	. bewildered.
23.	Spurrin's .	. banns of marriage.
23.	Beeäled .	. bawled.
25.	Threäped .	. asserted forcibly.
27.	Gabbed .	. talked incessantly.

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

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